

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

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TO :

DATE: 30 Aug. 1951

FROM :

SUBJECT: Comment on Annex A of 1 Oct. Review of NSC 69 Programs:

1. In the section on probable Soviet objectives (paragraphs 8-17), only two alternative policies are considered, (a) a continued aggressive policy with considerable risks of global war, and (b) a relaxation of tension. There is in fact, a third course which I am inclined to consider the most likely; a gradual and grudging Soviet accommodation to a new power situation, the USSR abandoning none of its hostility towards the West but being unwilling to take the risks involved in further expansionist moves. I realize that the paper at least implies this thought in its consideration of a "relaxation of tension", but I believe it is a separate and distinct possibility and worthy of separate consideration.

2. Our thinking on the theme of "relaxation of tension" has, I believe, lost sight of some of the basic concepts of Soviet policy. The Soviet leaders believe fundamentally in force, threats and intimidation as the primary weapons of policy. The "peace" campaign, for example, is based more on the threat of a third World War than on the sweetness and reason of peace. An example of Soviet preference for intimidation can be found in the current state of the Korean armistice talks. In the C/NE memo on Soviet participation in the San Francisco Conference, we noted that the USSR, in order to create a favorable atmosphere for its efforts in San Francisco, might "engineer a cease fire agreement in Korea." Such an approach might well have been the most effective means of disrupting US plans for a Japanese treaty. Judging from the present suspension of the talks, however, the Kremlin in its efforts to influence the San Francisco Conference has preferred to increase tension on the Korean question rather than ease it. A last minute reversal is not out of the question, but it appears that any "conciliatory" gesture will at best be agreement to continue the talks.

3. Thus, as western strength grows, it appears logical to expect increasing threats and saber-rattling from the Kremlin as its preferred method of attempting to thwart Western rearmament. Such an attitude would, of course, not preclude

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Soviet accommodation to the new situation, and these might well develop a "relaxation of tension" due to increased Western strength. This would, however, be in spite of Soviet policy rather than because of it.

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